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Subject: The Deceitfulness of Riches.

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OF

SERMONS

PREACHED BY

HENRY WARD BEECHER.



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THE DECEITFULNESS OF RICHES.

“ And the deceitfulness of riches.—MATT. XIII., 22.”

This is a part of the parable of the sowing of the seed.

“ He also that received seed among the thorns is he that heareth the word; and the care of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word, and he becometh unfruitful.”

In other parts of Scripture we have descriptions of the destructive influence of riches. But while they are elsewhere called *canker*, and names involving corrosion and disease, it is the *deceitfulness* of riches that is here meant—and that, too, in reference to the growth in us of the truth—the quickening in us of moral sense. It chokes the word, and it becomes unfruitful. That is, as seed left to weeds (and especially, in Palestine, to thorns and briars), which eagerly take possession of land that is not tilled, comes up, it may be, but languishes, and never comes to head or ripens into grain; so men are kept from developing Christian graces or Christian manhood, not so much by riches in their unavoidable nature, as by the deceitfulness which attends the obtaining, the keeping, and the using of them.

We are not to interpret the New Testament as being averse to riches. In the Old Testament wealth was distinctly recognized as a divine blessing. It was the reward which God gave to a life of integrity and virtue. Ample fields, vineyards, olive-orchards, fruit-trees, bringing forth abundantly—these were promised to those who obeyed God. This was the Oriental form of wealth. The New Testament does not contradict it. It sometimes seems to do so, but it is only on account of the emphasis which it places upon the dangers which betide an indiscriminate and untaught love of excessive riches. Not only are we told that it is a canker, but we are told that it eats men as a cancer would eat them. *The love of money* is pronounced to be a root of all evil; but nowhere is *money* or *riches* said to be evil. An inordinate concupiscence of wealth is evil. Our version has it that it is *the* root of all evil, as if it took

precedence of everything else. A better rendering is, that it is *a* root of all evil: there is no evil in the world which has not been set on foot either by the desire of wealth, or by the possession of it.

In the text there is no declaration against riches themselves, any more than against care. *Care* means, at large, the ordinary duties and burdens of life. There is a side on which riches, however good they may be, are dangerous, and that side is their deceitfulness. They deceive men.

God's providence has employed riches for the development of human society, and for the education of men. It cannot be controverted that the amassing of property has always been a way of obtaining manhood, and that the ingenuity and perseverance and commercial thrift required for the amassing of treasure, has at the same time blessed the world, tending toward peace, development, civilization, power, bearing seeds in one country which have ripened in other lands. Although attending commerce and the pursuit of wealth are many incidental evils, yet, on the whole, commerce has been an evangelizing element in the world. Although individual men may thrive in wealth in communities that are poor, yet it is susceptible, I think, of demonstration, that poor communities never accomplish much; that while riches are not necessary for each individual, riches *are* necessary for large bodies of men, and for the race. It is by their instrumentality that God develops men, and carries refinement and civilization throughout the earth. In our day, the production of values is education; and more men are called to earn riches than ever before. It can no longer be said that merchants are a class. It can no longer be said that those men who are seeking wealth are the few. Money-getting pervades the mass of society from top to bottom. Everybody is more or less a producer, in the wholesome parts of society. The desire for riches is probably more wide-spread in this land than in any other. Not only so, but there is a larger amount of property owned *per capita* here than in any other country. The stimulating nature of our free institutions tends to wake men up. The doctrine of human equality is coming, in this land, to be universally accepted. We have no titles. We have no political or class distinctions. The distinctions which exist among us are those which we ourselves make. They are founded upon learning, and skill in art, and wealth with its attendant excellences. These distinctions every man in the community feels that he has a right to if he earns them.

We have also a stimulant which is derived from the climate; from the soil; from the vast unbroken treasures of the mountains; from the ungathered treasures of the wilderness. The heavens

above and the earth beneath, the water and the land, the rock and the soil, are all holding out treasure to our glowing expectation. And upon this land has been spread the most ambitious and active of all peoples. It is not the old and sluggish that emigrate. The young, the enterprising, the daring, come to our shores. And although they bring with them some who are slow and weak by reason of age, yet the character of the population of this continent is that of eager industry.

Our faults, and largely our virtues, spring out of this wide ambition for wealth, and this wide industry which is manifested in getting it. There is a universal movement in society toward the acquiring of wealth. Indeed, there is danger that those professions which pay slenderly will be abandoned, while all those ways which have their insignia written in letters of gold, and which promise speedy wealth, are absolutely choked with men who are determined to be rich. I think I may say that far more than in any other direction the ambition of the young in our time is turned toward money-making—and that, not from disreputable motives; not for base and sordid reasons, though perhaps in excess and in disproportion. The generous, the daring, the educated, the refined, all seek it, because all appreciate how mighty an instrument it is in the hands of men.

Now, we are not to relinquish this pursuit of wealth. When we consider what we mean by *wealth*—that it is the production of an active force in life; that it is not simply a shadow but a reality; that it is an instrument of blessedness; when we consider its power for refinement, for civilization, for education, for material thrift; when we consider how much it may be made to serve morality, and virtue, and domesticity, and religion itself; when we consider that the church, in all its wide-spread enterprises throughout the globe, is obliged to seek help from riches—we are not to stand and inveigh against riches, and we are not to warn young men against becoming or desiring to become, rich. It may be that there is an excessive desire in that direction; it may be that too many are pursuing wealth to an extent which is injurious; but we are not to condemn the thing itself: we are faithfully to point out to them the evils which accompany it. We are to put in the hands of every one of the ten thousand eager aspirants for wealth the warnings of God against the dangers which go with it, that they may watch; that they may be vigilant. And this morning I shall call your attention, not to all, but to a few of the principal dangers on one side—namely, *the deceitfulness of riches*.

1. Riches are deceitful in the insidious growth which they pro-

mote of the desire for wealth, quite independent of what it is worth in its positive power. No man is hurt who fixes his eye upon moral, social or domestic ends, and then seeks wealth purely as an instrument by which to accomplish these ulterior purposes. The motive which he has redeems him from peril. But the transition from wishing money for the legitimate purposes of money to a desire for it in and of itself, quite independent of its uses, is very insidious. There are many who pass entirely from the desire of riches as a power, to the desire of riches simply as a possession. For men scarcely study what the moral effect of the pursuit of wealth is. They do not watch themselves. There is no sentinel set to warn them against danger from excess. They do not perceive what changes take place in them from period to period. They do not look back to see what they are as compared with what they were. And so the desire for wealth grows stronger and stronger. The generous feeling with which they set out is disappearing more and more. The idea of good to be done is less and less distinct. And finally their ambition becomes solely a desire for the acquisition of riches.

2. In the transition from a normal desire for wealth to the fervor of avarice, there is great danger of deception among men. Avarice is nothing but a higher form of the wish to obtain property—so high that it cuts off one's sympathy from others; and lowers the impression of the value of things which are more valuable than riches. It becomes first a kind of intemperance; and then it becomes, like intemperance itself, a disease; and finally it becomes insanity. There are few misers; but there are a great many men who have the first touches of miserism in them. There is a closeness, a tenacity with which men hold money. There is a growing indisposition to use it for any other purpose than to increase it. There is a spirit by which men see in riches only capital to be invested for the sake of its interest, which is to them good to be invested again. So they roll their possession, as winter-boys in New England used to roll the snow. In rolling, it increases in magnitude, and is at last vaster than they can shove. And when they have amassed it, what do they do? They let it stand where it is, and the summer finds it, and melts it all away. It sinks to water again; and the water is sucked up, and goes to make snow once more for other foolish winter-boys to roll into heaps. Men go on amassing wealth, either in the early stages, or the middle stages, or the latter stages of avarice, desiring it, not for what it can do, not for what it is as a quickener, as a helper, as a teacher, as a purveyor of God's bounty, but purely and simply because it is wealth.

This avarice does not run alone to money. Men who collect books, as I can bear witness, often find and buy them, not so much for what they can do with them, as that they may have more. They come to desire valuable books, simply because they are valuable. Especially they desire rare books. If there are but two or three copies of a certain book in the world, they are all the more eager to to possess one of them. And then there is often a desire to have different editions of the same works. And so men enlarge, and enlarge, and enlarge.

I know how misers feel. I do not know how they feel about gold and silver ; but I know how they feel about books and engravings and etchings. An old second-hand book dealer said to me, one day, to my great benefit, as I went in to inquire about a book, " Oh, you've got it, haven't you ? " " Got what," said I. " Why, the book mania. You bought an edition of this book of me awhile ago, and now you are after another edition. Yes, that's it. When I see a man who wants another edition of the same work, I say to myself, ' He has the mania. He is bit.' " Sure enough, I was bit, although I am now cured.

He that wants acre on acre,——— you do not ? Well, then you are not a farmer. Did you ever see a farmer who did not want all the land that bounded his ? He would want it if it were ten thousand acres more, and ten thousand on that.

Garments ? I do not care for more than one good suit, so that I may exchange it often enough ; but are there not those who would add dress to dress, dress to dress, far more than they could wear ? Still, there is this desire of increasing the treasure of garments.

So it is with every kind of store. This predisposition to press wealth beyond any legitimate use ; this tendency to transfer the proper desire of wealth—that is the desire of wealth as a power and benefaction—to the desire of wealth simply to hoard it—this is very insidious and very deceitful in its approaches. Beware of it.

3. Wealth is deceitful in taking the place of legitimate enjoyments in life. When men begin the adventure of wealth-seeking, they are often generous ; they are often good ; they are often susceptible ; they are often broad in their tastes and relishes for pleasure. I love to see a young man go into business rejoicing in virtues ; large-hearted ; quick to respond to all the touches of friendship ; alive to every inspiration of heroism ; ambitious of distinction in more than his own routine or round of life ; full of a sense of the admirableness of beauty ; awake to that beauty which God's hand profusely scatters in the heaven and upon the earth. I am always sorry to see a young man who, when once he is engaged in

business, begins to plume himself on having cut off these "superfluities," as he calls them ; who has grown careless of everything ; who cares very little for politics, very little for society, very little for anything, till money is spoken of, but who then is roused, sensitive, full of conversation, eager. It is not a good sign. And yet, old curmudgeons will tell you, " Let everything alone, my son, until you have a good solid foundation under your feet, and then you can attend to some of these fancy things." That is to say, " Do not listen to your moral sense. While you are making money, make money—do not listen to taste. While you are making money, make money—do not listen to ideas of social enjoyment. While you are making money do not learn music ; do not learn painting or drawing ; do not practice manly athletic exercises ; do not do anything except go to your office early and stay there late." And when you are old, and have achieved wealth, what are you worth ? What is your condition ? You are as dry as the leather pouch which holds your ducats. All your juice is gone.

How deceitful is that process ! How few men retain the exhilarations of their youth, or what are called their wilder moods, when they are gaining wealth ! And yet, how much better are these wilder moods of untrained, generous youth, than those hard, senseless, soulless moods which men run into by addiction to money-making, and the absolute exclusion of everything else !

The process is very gradual. It steals on men as death steals on the sick. It is known afar off only by the gradual coldness of the extremities, which creeps up, inch by inch, little by little, until at last the vital organs are reached, and the man is dead.

4. The relative growth of the selfish over the generous ought to furnish a separate head—and it shall ; for I apprehend that very few persons ever watch the process as it comes upon themselves. I believe that constitutionally, as a general thing, youth is generous. What is life ? The remains of youth are the best part of it. Although it may be inexperienced, and may make mistakes, yet it carries with it sympathy with men and interest in the well-being of society. Men starting out with good blood, good-nature and good prospects in life, are apt to be more nearly right than men forty or fifty years of age, unless the latter have been by divine grace enabled to cultivate their conscience and heart all the way through.

It is necessary that one should work. There is nothing more wrong than to suppose that a man can get wealth without devoting himself to the acquiring of it. There must be industry and forethought. Addiction to business is indispensable if one is going to succeed in amassing property. There ought to be every day vaca-

tions for the culture of the mind, and for recreation. Nevertheless, the gaining of money is not an accident. It is a matter of design from beginning to end, and legitimately. The product of the best thought, and the best thought applied in the best way, is required for the obtaining of wealth. And the very process of making money may itself be an education of men if they are not deceived by it, and left to go without watch or without heed.

Frugality and economy are necessary; but then, how easy it is for a man to turn his industry into continuity without a pause! How easy it is for a man, out of frugality and economy, to come to elegant stinginess—that is to say, stinginess at heart, with just enough outgiving to keep him respectable in the circle where he moves! What is called *generosity*, is but the price which a man pays in consideration of being thought not stingy. Thank God, everybody thinks stinginess is mean. Nobody likes to be called stingy. A man who is worth twenty millions of dollars, and gives six cents a year, does not like to be called stingy. Men give to some of the customary things, and give obviously in various ways, in order to turn off that imputation.

But this will not do. A man needs to stand well with *himself*. A man wants, in looking at himself, to say, “What am I, after all? What am I, in and in, through and through?”

The deceitfulness of riches, I think will be detected, if one institutes a comparison between the exercise of his generous feelings in earlier and later life. A man, when he was on a salary of a thousand dollars a year, found means of helping his associates. Here is a boy who was brought up in the country on a farm, and who, having come down to New York, has got into trouble; the man goes to him, and says, “Look here; I will see you through this thing, if I go to the poorhouse;” and he does see him through it. He helps a companion on a thousand dollars a year. By and by his income is five thousand dollars; and a friend right along by the side of him, perhaps from sickness, and perhaps from an unfortunate partnership, has come to trouble. And now, I want to ask, Has this man grown generous in proportion as his income has increased? Does he say to his companion, “I will give you forty thousand dollars, or fifty thousand, anything, rather than see you go under. You shall not go under. I will hold you up”? Is there that tendency in his disposition to risk what he has in charitable sympathy and help which there was when he was less prosperous? When a man has an estate, is he inclined to use what he has in the same broad, liberal way that he was when he was possessed of only scanty means? Does a man’s generosity grow in the ratio that his wealth does? I do not ask

whether men give away a good deal. That is not the question. If you institute a comparison between the relative *proportion* of what they gave when they were twenty years of age, and when they were twenty-five; or between what they gave away when they were twenty-five and when they were thirty; or between what they gave away when they were thirty and when they were thirty-five, and so on to forty, and forty-five, and fifty, you will generally find that they grow less generous as they advance in years; and that by the time they are fifty they generally begin to be very crustaceous and impenetrable.

I apprehend that although it will be found that many men grow up without having a suspicion that they are deteriorating, and without the reputation of deteriorating, if you make inquisition into their life, it will also be found that the ratio of the use of their power for generous objects has been steadily decreasing from the beginning down to the end.

I have a yearly income of a thousand dollars, and I give away one hundred dollars a year. I am prosperous, and by and by I have an income of a million dollars a year—there are such men. Do I give away one-tenth of that? If, having an income of a million dollars a year, I gave away one-tenth of it, would it not be considered an extraordinary act of benevolence? Does any man dare to say, in the pursuit of wealth, “I will keep up the ratio between what I give and what I receive all my life long”? There are some who do that, and who increase the proportion. There are heroes among moneyed men. Saints used to be taken out of caves, but nowadays we have Protestant saints in the ordinary walks of life. There are men in Wall Street—brokers and bankers—who stand near to the heart of God, and who are pouring out their means in a way which gives evidence of a Christianized manhood in them. There are noble men in every direction—enough to encourage the young to believe that such men are possible in business circles. But, generally speaking, is not the deceitfulness of riches shown in this: that men are far more generous relatively to what they have, while they are young, than when they are old?

5. Then there is a deceitfulness to be noticed in the gradual development of self-esteem and self-sufficiency among those who are in the possession of wealth. When men begin, they all begin together; and it is a fair race; but they do not all come out alike. One, and another, and another, drop out along the way. By and by a few reach the goal. And he that is among the foremost begins to feel his superiority—especially if he has gone through ten periods of commercial panic, and come out all right. How he straightens

himself up! How he holds his head above those who have not been so fortunate! "They may be very good men, and they may be rich men, but then, they failed, and I never did." Yes you did. When a man has become thoroughly conceited, he has gone into a universal bankruptcy of manhood. When a man has, by seeking wealth and gaining it, learned to compare himself with his fellow men, he has failed.

"Oh, they are good men, nice fellows enough; but then you never meet them on 'Change." The kingdom of Heaven, to them, means the bank. To them manhood means the power to get and to hold money. And it is very insidiously, deceitfully, that this measurement passes into men's minds. They come to judge themselves by measurements of conceit. And at last they walk in life feeling that money has made them second Nebuchadnezzars; and they strut, and say, "Is not this great Babylon that I have built by the honor of my name and the might of my right hand?" Are not riches, have not riches been, to them, deceitful, corrupting, destroying? When I see a man who has by riches been insensibly led from sympathy with his fellow-men to set himself up over them, and to look down upon those who are poorer than he—the working classes—the men that are not, like himself, pocketous; when I see a man who is so puffed up by his prosperity that he disdains those who are not prosperous around about him, I say, "Oh, the deceitfulness of riches!" The man is a fool to the top of his bent, and he does not know it. The poorest man in the world is the man who touches his fellow men in the fewest points. The richest man in the world is the man who has the most warm and glowing sympathies which connect him with all classes and conditions in human life. Men are like great trees, which never feed by one root, but which spread their roots abroad in all manner of ramifications, drawing nourishment from the earth in every direction. A tree which has but one root running straight down into the ground, is like a man who, by the deceitfulness of riches, has cut himself off from all sources of sympathetic supply, and who ere long becomes branchless for want of nourishment, or is overthrown by the storm.

6. The deceitfulness of riches is seen, also, in an entire perversion which takes place in the minds of men who are prospered in respect to what riches can do for them. Men feel that this world is good enough when they are prospered, and are making a great deal of money. When material forces are perpetually working for them like smelting furnaces in iron districts which are allowed to go out neither day nor night, but burn on the year round, then they feel

that this world is good enough for them, and they do not care for the kingdom of God. But how are they cajoled ! As if riches could do anything except for the body !

Let a man be worth—as I suppose some men are—a hundred millions of dollars, and be shut up in his bedroom with the gout, what is he really worth ? Or, suppose a man is worth fifty millions of dollars, and suppose the only child that he has in the world, the joy of his life, one of God's little children, that ran out with him as he went away in the morning, and greeted him as he came home at night, and kept bright in him the only green spot that was there, is taken away, because God will not trust him with it any longer, and he is left sitting by the empty cradle from which has flown all that there was on earth of love to him, what is he worth ? What is a man worth though he have fifty millions of dollars, sitting by the side of his empty cradle ? What is there in all his money, or in all his ambition, that can comfort a man whose heart is broken ? Money in your hand can do a great many things. It can stop, and does stop, many tears ; but no money can stanch the tears of one who has lost the only object of his affection. Money can build hospitals, and alleviate fevers ; but if you have a fever it cannot cure you. Money can save many groans and sorrows ; but when your friends are gone, and you have none to love, your money cannot supply your lack, though you be as rich as Cræsus. There are some things that riches can do for you, but if you can get nothing but money you are not to be envied. Do not run the risk of losing everything else for the sake of money. Money can buy a great many things, but it cannot buy fidelity ; it cannot buy love ; it cannot buy peace ; cannot buy hope ; it cannot buy consolation. There are hours when the soul stands, as it were, between two worlds, bankrupt for one, and a stranger to the other. All the money in the world cannot help you under such circumstances. It is right that you should make money. I will not dissuade you from that. There are many sequences of money-making which are noble. But there are many things which money cannot do for you. So do not let it deceive you. It may deceive you. It will whisper into your ears many things that are lies. Consider some of these.

While you are embarking in the search for wealth, you will, every one of you, be told by Mammon, " You shall surely be rich ; " and you will neglect many things that you would have done. You will put your chances in life in that direction because you have faith that you shall realize the desire of your ambition. But not one man out of fifty who starts in this race really gets rich.

If men simply wanted competence enough to give them what

they need to eat, and to drink, and to wear, and to bring their children into the path where they, too, will be obliged to depend upon their industry and frugality for their living, forty-nine men out of fifty, in such a land as ours, ought, almost without a chance of doubt, to have that amount of prosperity ; but that is not what men think of. When they say that they are going to be rich, they do not mean merely that they are going to have enough to live on, and to bring up their children honorably, and to surround themselves with the necessities of life. What they call riches is something over and above what is necessary. It is something to be laid up. And not more than one in fifty ever reach that. Of those who are neglecting their youth and manhood, and are bent on becoming wealthy, saying, "I am bound to die a rich man," forty-nine are going to be deceived where one is going to succeed.

It is the deceitfulness of hope in regard to riches that you should take heed to. One man is a carpenter, and he means to be a master-builder, and to speculate in houses and lands, and to be as well off as that other man. He goes to work, and, little by little, amasses property, and puts money in the bank. Another man is a sailor ; and he means to rise to the command of a ship, and to make ventures, and to own ware-houses. He is going to be a rich man. Another man is a merchant. He is a dry-goods broker. He is going to be rich. Everywhere, whichever way you look, men are confident, when they begin, that they are going to succeed. And I should not object to this confident hope if it were not blinding and deceiving. It is the beauty of hope that it does not estimate difficulty, but runs with courage into things which, if it stopped to calculate their difficulties it would not be willing to assault. But that is the point where the mischief comes in. You are neglecting the culture of your understanding and your social affections. You are not building up a home, or the competency to have a home. You are neglecting your manhood, and will be cheated of external wealth. You will be a double bankrupt—a bankrupt inside and outside, in heart and pocket.

And the promises of the happiness which you will experience in your riches are probably not going to be fulfilled, even if you should be one of the few who succeed in amassing wealth. Not once in a hundred times are they the most happy men, as I have seen, who have the greatest amount of riches. Now and then a man is happy in his riches because he uses them well, and keeps alive the more generous and manly qualities of his nature.

"It is more blessed to give than to receive."

A man who has true benevolence, and has the means of gratify-

ing it, is, or may be, one of the most happy men in the world. A man who can go out a knight-errant, not any more with sword and spear, but with that which is more potent than any sword or spear—pecuniary power; who can help the young to start in life; who can stand and bridge over the emergencies of men; who can carry to the sick and suffering the necessities of life; who can open the door of the school, and put within the reach of the poor and the ignorant an education; who is day by day carrying blessings to thousands; who loves to make men happy, and having wealth, devotes it to making them happy—such a man is happy. His riches make him happy—and they ought to. But when I look at rich men as a class, I find that they are not the happiest of men, by any means. They do not enjoy home more than other men, nor as much as other men.

I tell you, there are two things which go to make fine playing on a violin. The first is a master's hand. The second is a good violin; and the quality of the instrument is full as important as the player's touch. If you take a violin and first break the highest string, and by and by snap the next one, and finally break the next one, leaving the base string, and that only, and that a great deal the worse for wear, Paganini himself could not bring very much out of that instrument except for surprise.

Men take their hearts, which are musical instruments, and snap this cord, and that, and that, reducing themselves to one or two points of sentient enjoyment, and then expect, because they are rich, that they shall be happy. What you are in yourself is to determine whether you are happy or not. You will not be made happy by external things. It is inside that happiness lives. It is that which is fresh and fruitful in you that is to make you happy. I would rather be a man with a sanguine temperament, with average good health, and in moderate business, with five hundred dollars a year, who sees everything on the bright side, and has a quiet hope of immortality through Jesus Christ—I would rather be such a man than many a rich man. Inconspicuous as he is, and small as his material resources are, he will shake more blossoms and more fruit off from the boughs of the tree of happiness in one year than you will, old curmudgeon, probably, in your whole life. And yet you and he are living for the same general end—to be happy. He is happy because he keeps strong and fresh those notes which vibrate joy; and you are unhappy because you despoil yourself of all power of enjoyment for the sake of that arch deceiver, riches, which glazes, and whispers, and promises, and betrays you.

7. There is another way in which wealth deceives men by promises.

How many men have I seen who promised that when they became rich they would do such and such noble things! "So soon as I have secured a competence, an independence, I mean to turn round and give all I can earn to charitable purposes." How many have thought that! How many of you who are in my hearing to-day have thought just that! When you began your business, it was with some scruples. Some of you thought you ought to be ministers. Some of you thought you ought to stay at home on the farm and take care of your aged parents. But you broke through all your scruples, and came down to the city. And you said, "I do not mean to be a sordid man. I mean to have enough; but as soon as I get ahead myself, I am going to turn round and make others happy. I am going to endow a school or a hospital. I am going to educate all my younger brothers and sisters, and all my cousins." But the trouble is, you never do get rich. You had not fifty cents in the world when you made these promises; and it is not many years before you are fairly worth fifty thousand dollars; but you do not feel yourself to be rich. You say, "If I hide this in three measures of meal, perhaps I may become rich." "So you invest it, and it increases until it is two hundred thousand. Then you say, "Two hundred thousand dollars is enough for a man to start on as capital." You set that to work, and in a short time it is five hundred thousand. Your neighbors think that is wealth enough to do something with; but, no, you are going to get rich. So that five hundred thousand dollars is sent out to get five hundred thousand more. Long are its fingers, and hard is its grasp; and by and by, when it comes back, it is increased to a million of dollars. You say, "A million dollars!—I used to think that when I had a million dollars I should be rich, but I do not feel much richer than I did when I had but a few thousands. I *will* be rich, though." So your million dollars goes out, like a muck-rake, scratching and raking everywhere, in order that you may be rich. You live to be forty-five years of age, and you die worth ten million dollars. You have all your life been saying, "I am not rich"; and sure enough God comes in and says, "Thou fool, thou art not rich. Whose now shall all that money be which you must leave behind you? Come to judgment, naked, carrying not one beloved dollar through the grave!" You had money enough to make the desert bud and blossom as the rose, which you promised to use for benevolent purposes if God would prosper you; but you broke this promise all through life, and now he takes it away from you.

You will be no more benevolent in your old age than you are in your youth and all the way through life. You are to judge of how

you will feel at eighty by the way you feel now. If you feel generous now, and you will *take care* of your generosity, it will go through life with you. You must carry with you the feelings which you expect to exercise by and by. You are now forming the character which is to remain with you to the end. If a man is going to do good when he has made money, let him, to prove it, do good in a smaller measure while he is making money.

In these and in many other ways which time would fail us to discriminate and individualize, but which will suggest themselves to your observation, and which you see in other men and they see in you reciprocally, are riches deceitful in their dealings with us.

And yet, many of you are called to make money. Much of your business is the amassing of riches. Wealth is a power. God says to you, "Gain that power, and use it for the welfare of your fellow men, and for my honor and my glory." I cannot, therefore, say to you, Turn back from it. But I must say this: You have entered upon a career which perhaps above almost any other is full of peril. It is the way of duty if God called you there, but it is a way of duty in which you must put on the whole armor of God. It is not for you to wait until you become rich before you become Christian men. You need the grace of Christ Jesus. You need to have your head covered in that battlefield. You need the breast-plate, and the greaves, and the shield, and the sword and the spear. You need to be kept while discharging your duty as the providence of God has marked it out for you.

If you have been accustomed to feel that there is no great peril connected with the amassing of riches, then the deceit has begun to work in you. There *is* peril in it. He who has begun to accumulate money ought, morning and evening, to humble himself before God, and say, "Search me, O God; try me, and see if there be any evil way in me." You need to lean upon the promise of God, "Lo, I will be with you to the end." If you walk in a consecrated way; if you have consecrated your heart to God; if you have lifted your right hand and consecrated your wealth to God; if you feel in your very soul, "I am the steward of God; this is not mine; it is lent to me to be improved upon for the good of my fellow men and for the glory of my Lord"; if God has given you this spirit, then All hail! You are doing a noble work, and are walking in a noble way, and not far before you is the crown and the city of refuge. But if you have no consecration, no moral purpose, no daily prayer, no fear, no outlooking, no watching; if you are going along that way in which so many hundreds of thousands have perished without conscience and without guard, Woe be to you!

May God, in his unspeakable mercy, grant to so many of you as are in the strength of life, and full of vigor; to so many of you as do not believe in your frangibility, and do not believe that there is any danger ahead; to so many of you as have a hope that is competent to look the whole future in the face—may God grant to you the shield of his providence. May his protection be over you. And may that love which led Christ to suffer and die for you, speak to you, from day to day, something of that inward manhood in which your life resides. May it speak to you of those duties which God discharges toward the universe, and expects you to discharge toward your fellow men. And may you be spoken to by the Holy Ghost of that other life, that glorious city, where, not by your riches, but by that virtue which has been wrought out in your heart by the divine Spirit, you shall stand high or low among the redeemed of the Lord.



PRAYER BEFORE THE SERMON.

Unite our hearts together, our Father, in the sense of our common need. Unite us in our feeling of dependence upon thee, and of gratitude therein. We do not draw near to thee as to one stern and vindictive. We come to the bosom of our Father. We come to the fountain of pity and to the source of all love. We draw near to thee as a God of love that hath taught us to love. Thou that hast awakened the feeling of love in us toward our children; thou that hast surrounded all our youth with the tender affection of parents; thou that hast taught us in our own experience to interpret something of thy nature—how much greater art thou than a man! How much greater is thy love, how much sweeter is it, how much more full of blessing, than any that we can conceive of! It is to thee that we draw near—not to our conception alone, but to all that in which thou art abundantly more than we can ask or think; to the greatness of that love which the ages cannot weary; to that love which brings faith and patience, which waits upon words through their infinite evolutions, and which is never tired; to that love which watches over all things, even the smallest and most insignificant. We rejoice in that love which is serving all things, and administering them, and leading them forward toward eras of greater and greater glory and purity. We rejoice in thee, O thou that art infinite, whom by searching we cannot find out in any way—surely not in all the magnitude of thine excellence of being. And we come to thee beseeching that thou wilt have compassion upon us. As the heavens, at night, drop down their dew upon the flowers and every one is refreshed, so wilt thou drop down upon us, this day, thy mercies, so that multitudes, including those that are the most sinful and the most unclean, may still feel that God's bounty hath found them.

Refresh, we pray thee, our faith. Let us not be carried away from believing in thee by our own feeble light of reason. May we see how mighty are the powers which environ us, and what are those streams which are bearing down the generations of men. May we feel our weakness and our ignorance, and trust in that supreme central power which is above all others, and better than all others. Out of our own littleness may we have ministered to us a sense of thy greatness; and in thy providence may we behold it; and in thy grace may we have intimations of it.

We pray that we may learn more and more to make out the invisible world, and the invisible God, and the invisible administration of sure mercy and glorious love. We pray that we may live as seeing Him who is invisible.

We beseech of thee, this morning, that thou wilt give to every one of us a sense of thy power and perfection in the work which we have begun, where we are bearing our own burdens, and where we are discouraged in the fight against our easily besetting sins. We mourn over our violations of obligations. We mourn over our broken vows. We mourn all along the way through which we have so feebly contested for heart-holiness. And we look to thee who didst begin the work in us to inspire in us mor- ar- dor, and minister to us more patience and fidelity, and finally to vouch- safe to us a victory over all sin and evil.

We pray that thou wilt grant unto all who are before thee this morn- ing, the nearness of thy presence, and those secret communications of grace which shall make every heart know that God hath thought of it. May those who are troubled for themselves be able to lean upon thee, and cast their burden on the Lord. May those who are troubled for others find the sense of thy sympathy encouraging them and sustaining them. If there be any who are ready to perish, whose hearts seem bruised and broken and cast down utterly; if there be those who look to see which way the gate of death shall open to give them escape, draw near to them. We pray that thou wilt open the prison-doors, and bring forth the captives, and shake off their chains, and crown them with victory. We beseech of thee that thou wilt draw near to all who are in any extremity, and who need thee for their very soul's salvation.

We pray for those who are not with us; for those who art languishing in sickness; for those who wait for death as the watcher waits for the morning. We pray for all who are environed by troubles at home. We pray for all who are tried in any way. Will the Lord be near to them all, and comfort them this day, and kindle in their hearts such faith and love and hope for the future, that all their distemperatures may seem as a pass- ing dream. We pray for those who are wandering abroad; for those who are sent on errands hither and thither upon the land and upon the sea. Will the Lord have them in his holy care and keeping, and protect them from harm, and restore them to their loved ones.

Grant that all that ministering providence which thou are enacting in our behalf from day to day and night by night may not pass unrequited by our gratitude. May we rejoice in God's goodness, and make mention of it daily with thanksgiving and with praise.

We pray for all for whom we should pray—the prayerless, the outcast, those that are in crimes, those that are dissolving in vices. Lord, wilt thou not raise up a gospel of hope for them? Wilt thou not strengthen those who go out to seek and to save them? Wilt thou not bring in many whom men forget, but who are not forgotten of God, to be monuments of thy grace, whose testimony shall carry hope, repentance, and recovery to others?

We pray for all those who seek for the amelioration of manners; for the purification of the laws; for the establishment of beneficent institutions throughout our land; for the spread of intelligence; for virtue and reformation; for justice and integrity.

We pray that thou wilt be pleased to bless all those who rule over us—the President of these United States, and those who are in authority with him, and the houses of Congress assembled. We beseech of thee that thou wilt be in the midst of our counselors, and minister to them the spirit of forbearance and of peace.

And we pray that the hearts of this great people may conspire together for things most honorable and most noble. We pray that the hearts of all nations and of all that rule in all nations of the world may tend toward unity and brotherly love. May there be no dashing together of warlike nations. May there be no spilling of blood. May there be no scenes of horrible cruelty. Wilt thou bring in the latter-day glory. Let the times of peace and helpfulness come. May there be no desire among nations to pull down and destroy each other: on the contrary, may they strive to build up and perfect one another. May that joyful day of promise come, for which we have so long waited, when it shall be proclaimed by the angels, sounding through all the heavens, that the kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

And to thy name shall be the praise, Father, Son, and Spirit. *Amen.*

PRAYER AFTER THE SERMON.

Our Father, we pray that thou wilt bless us in the contemplation of thy truth in all its instructions. Grant that we may not be puffed up by worldly prosperity, nor think ourselves strong when our strength is but of the outside. May we search to see if the root of faith and of love and of truth is in us. May we, in the midst of outward prosperity, know the dangers that attend the inward life. May we not trust our own power. May we lean on thee. Protect us, Lord Jesus. Protect those who are called by thy name, and who still walk in the way of danger. Grant that their hearts may be increased in the power of godliness. Grant that they may more and more dwell with the spirit of the Master and with the inspiration of heaven resting upon their hearts from day to day. And let the power which is being accumulated in the earth go to the promotion of truth, and of purity, and of affection. Let it not be used for the upholding of corruption in the world, but for the building up of thy kingdom. We ask it in the name of Christ Jesus our Lord. *Amen.*

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
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